



# Duckworth Speaks with Metro East Faith Leaders About COVID-19 Response & Environmental Justice Priorities

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WASHINGTON, D.C.] – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), [co-founder of the Senate’s first-ever Environmental Justice Caucus](#), spoke by phone today with leaders of United Congregations of Metro East to discuss issues faced by members of the Metro East faith-based community. During the call, Duckworth highlighted priorities she will push for in future COVID-19 relief legislation, such as increased funding for communities facing environmental justice issues, as well as work she’s done at the federal level to help the region.

“These last few weeks have been some of the darkest I can remember, but we will make it through this, even if we have a long road ahead of us—and that’s in large part because of people like the faith leaders in the Metro East,” Duckworth said. “I’ll keep working to provide much-needed federal support and oversight to the region not only to help address and recover from this public health and economic crisis, but help the communities plagued by the consequences of the inequities in our healthcare and environmental regulatory systems.”

Since the COVID-19 public health crisis began, Senator Duckworth has led with a wide range of actions to support middle-class working Americans and help our nation better respond to the pandemic, [including supporting the Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) that’s now law, refocusing the Trump Administration’s efforts on testing and access to tests. She also [voted for the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#), which makes important progress to help Americans address and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. While not perfect, the bipartisan compromise does put workers and their families—not corporations—first by putting cash directly in the pockets of consumers, greatly expanding emergency unemployment insurance and providing

immediate relief for small businesses. The *CARES Act* also includes transparent oversight of bailed-out corporations and additional resources for state and local governments—as well as our hospitals and health centers—that are all on the front lines of this crisis. Duckworth [supported the supplemental funding bill](#) to provide more money to small businesses, hospitals and healthcare workers. For more information about resources available to Illinoisans and what the Senator has done throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, [click here](#).

As the [co-founder of the Senate's first-ever Environmental Justice Caucus](#), Duckworth has worked to raise awareness of the many environmental and pollution issues that have created public health challenges, which disproportionately impact low income communities and communities of color. In the Metro East region, Duckworth called for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to [investigate potential health hazards](#) from a waste facility in Sauget, Illinois. Earlier this year, Duckworth also urged the EPA [immediately start testing air](#) at certain facilities in Illinois for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFOS and PFOA) contamination, specifically requesting testing at the facility in Sauget. Earlier this week, Duckworth also [announced environmental justice priorities](#) included in the *America's Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2020* and the *Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020*